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## Effectiveness of Correctional Programmes in Curbing Reoffending

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### **Abstract:**

*Correctional programmes are aimed at equipping offenders with survival life skills to enable them to be reintegrated into society upon release. However, a majority of released offenders continue to reoffend, questioning the efficacy of the Zimbabwe Prisons Correctional programmes. This study, sought to investigate the effectiveness of correctional programmes implemented by ZPCS. Firstly, the study aimed to identify the correctional programmes practiced at the institution, secondly to determine factors that affect the effectiveness of programmes, thirdly to investigate the factors that cause reoffending after having undergone such correctional programmes and finally to recommend ways of making the correctional program more effective to mitigate reoffending. The research made use of a descriptive case study approach. Primary Data was gathered through the use of questionnaire and interviews. A total 24 reoffenders were invited to participate from a population of 96 reoffenders at the institution, 4 of whom were released inmates. The study established that correctional programmes are poorly implemented. The study also established that the programmes also fail because they take place in a living environment which is hostile, filled with negative and anti-social criminogenic behaviours and attitudes hence encouraging reoffending. The study also reveals that gaining employment after imprisonment is difficult as correctional programmes do not continue after imprisonment which makes it difficult for inmates to adjust to life after prison. The study therefore recommends that Zimbabwe Prisons And Correctional Services should collaborate with partners such as employment agencies to encourage them to employ ex inmates who would have gained vocational skills in prisons. The study also recommended the recruitment and training of qualified personal to carry out the various rehabilitative programs in prisons. Lastly, there is also need for the Government to allocate more funds to the Ministry to improve quality of services and infrastructure that enables offenders to rehabilitate in a less hostile environment that encourages rehabilitation.*

**Keywords:** *Reoffending, Prison, Inmate rehabilitation, Offender reintegration*

### **1. Introduction**

Offender rehabilitation and reintegration is integral towards the functioning of any society. Many scholars such as Albertus (2010) and Polaschek (2012) argue that traditional approaches to dealing with crime in the past mostly favoured retribution and incarceration of offenders. In spite of this punitive approach to dealing with the problems of crime, research showed that crime rates were rising rather than declining. Scholars such as Muntingh (2001) and Perry (2006) argue that over 30 years of experimentation with the punitive and retributive approach have seen prison populations skyrocketing, leading to the conclusion that deterrence has hardly had any impact on offender reoffending and in some situations, actually increased reoffending (Public Safety Canada, 2007).

In light of the growing body of scientific evidence showing the limitations of a punitive approach to crime around the globe, many countries began to move towards a more holistic approach in dealing with offenders which mainly incorporates the need to rehabilitate and reintegrate offenders into mainstream society in a manner that reduces the likelihood of reoffending. Padayachee, (2008) notes that offender reintegration as opposed to retributive punishment and imprisonment is aimed at protecting both offenders and society. While offender reintegration and rehabilitation is not to be seen as crime prevention strategy on its own, it is seen as part of a restorative justice approach to crime.

However, with the introduction of correctional programs, we still see an increase in cases of reoffending. Albertus (2010) argues that relapsing of ex-convicts is mainly due to the failure to support their reintegration into society as law-abiding citizens which in turn contributes significantly to the already increasing crime rate. It may also be argued that at times the type of correctional programs been implemented may not have the desired effect of rehabilitating offenders.

### *1.1. The Zimbabwe Prison and Correctional Services (ZPCS)*

At its inception in 1980, the Zimbabwe Prison Service was created in terms of Section 99 (1) of the Lancaster House Constitution which provides that; "There shall be a Prison Service for the administration of prisons in Zimbabwe and for the protection of society from criminals through the incarceration and rehabilitation of offenders and their re- integration into society". The new Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) provides for the creation of the Prisons and Correctional Services. The addition of the words "Correctional Services" seems to suggest that the incarceration now has a bias on rehabilitation of offenders. However, it is yet to be seen if the correctional aspect of their service has produced the intended results.

### *1.2. Statement of the Problem*

Correctional programmes are aimed at equipping inmates with survival life skills to enable them to lead crime free life upon release, reduce prison population to manageable levels and breaking the offending cycles among others (Gendreau and Ross, 1979). However, facts on the ground show that the prison population continues to rise and the majority of the convicted offenders are not first offenders, leading to questioning the efficacy of correctional programmes implemented by correctional facilities. It is well documented that prison correctional programmes are not succeeding in turning away the majority of offenders from crime. Fifty eight percent of offenders released in 2010 were reconvicted of another offence within 2 years of being released from prison (Chikurubi Farm Prison Admission Register 2012). Thus, it was against this background that this research was undertaken to investigate the reasons behind prisoners reoffending despite having undergone correctional programmes.

### *1.3. Objectives of the Study*

The following were the objectives of the study:

- To identify the correctional programs implemented by ZPCS.
- To determine the factors that affect the effectiveness of correctional programs
- To explore the reasons for re-offending
- To establish means to mitigate reoffending.

### *1.4. Research Questions*

The following research questions guided the execution of this study:

- What correctional programs being implemented by ZPCS?
- Which factors affect the effectiveness of correctional programs?
- What are the reasons for re- offending?
- What can be done to mitigate reoffending?

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1. Conceptual Framework*

#### 2.1.1. Traditional Versus Reformatory Punishment

There is a consensus that that the main justifications for punishment boil down to four aspects, namely; deterrence, incapacitation, retribution and rehabilitation (Dunbar & Langdin, 2008). Whilst most modern correctional services are moving towards rehabilitation of offenders (Jewkes & Letherby, 2008), the other traditional aspects of punishment (deterrence, incapacitation and retribution) have been criticised. Sir Godfrey Lushington (1985) had this to say pertaining to the old prison system;

"I regard as unfavourable to reformation the status of a prisoner throughout his whole career; the crushing of self respect, the starving of all moral instinct he may possess, the absence of opportunity to do or receive kindness, the continual association with none but criminals..." Jacoby (2004:326)

Greenberg (1977) observed that as a measure for offender rehabilitation, secure and humane control is not enough. He encouraged that prisons services should offer correctional programmes to offenders that transform them to be better men and women both physically and morally upon release. Correctional programmes help inmates to acquire skills in various trades as a pre requisite for their future lives in the world of employment. It allows the inmates to upgrade and stay relevant to the changing society outside the prison wall as well as it is an opportunity for inmates to increase their content knowledge base. Hence, we find the prison system is gravitating towards a correctional approach, through the adoption of contemporary correctional programmes that attempt to teach offenders how to substitute lawful types of behaviour for unlawful actions rather than simply punish wrongdoers.

### 2.1.2. The Risk Principle

According to the Public Safety Canada (2007), the risk principle is based on the fact that re-offending can be minimised if the level of therapeutic services provided to the offender is proportional to the offender's risk to re-offend. This model is based on three assumptions (Polaschek, 2012). First, it assumes that intervening to help offenders reduces re-offending and benefits the community as well. Second, it assumes that the only way to intervene effectively is through compassionate, collaborative and dignified human service intervention that targets change on factors that predict criminal behaviour. Last, it also assumes that "correctional rehabilitation is usually resourced by and accountable to government; although offenders have rights to assistance with all aspects of functioning and correctional programmes are not mandated to address non-criminogenic needs" (Polaschek, 2012: 15).

An effective program must differentiate low risk from high risk offenders and identify factors that are linked to relapse and desistance before designing any programmes (Andrews, 2001). Higher risk offenders require more intensive intervention whilst brief and narrowly focused programmes can benefit lower risk offenders (Bonta, 1997 and Polaschek, 2012). Thus reliable risk assessment is a pre-requisite for delivery of effective treatment.

### 2.1.3. Need Principle

This principle channels the focus of correctional treatment to criminogenic needs. Criminogenic needs are dynamic attributes that are directly linked to criminal behaviour, for example, substance abuse and employment problems. Unlike static risk factors that can only change in one direction and immutable to treatment intervention, criminogenic needs are dynamic in that they come and go (Andrews, 2001). Criminogenic needs serve as treatment goals which, if successfully addressed, may reduce reoffending (Bonta 1997).

### 2.1.4. Responsivity Principle

The responsivity principle, according to Andrews (2001), entails maximizing the offender's ability to learn from a rehabilitative intervention by providing cognitive-behavioural treatment and tailoring the intervention to the learning style, motivation, abilities and strengths of the offenders. On the other hand, Polaschek (2012) notes that general responsivity refers to the use of general techniques and processes such as cognitive social learning methods to influence behaviour. Conversely, specific responsivity leads to variations among offenders in the styles and modes of service to which they respond. Specific responsivity takes into account strengths, learning style, personality, motivation and bio-social variables such as gender, race and characteristics of the individual (Andrews, 2001).

### 2.1.5. Dynamic Risk Factors

Dynamic risk factors are those that measure change in the offender (such as attitudes and values, companions and social achievement), and assist in the successful prediction of reoffending. Bonta (1997), Gendreau, Cullen and Bonta (1994), Taxman and Thanner (2006) and other researchers indicate that the most useful dynamic risk factors are those that are amenable to deliberate interventions and those that are predictive of the individual's future criminal activities (criminogenic) such as antisocial attitudes and behaviour (that is bad family relationships, anger responses, hostility, substance abuse, and employment problems). Hanson and Bussiere (1996) postulate that it is knowledge of dynamic factors that is necessary in order to assess changes in an offender's risk level. Through participation in correctional programmes, an offender may become less likely to reoffend, but correctional practitioners would not be able to measure this change unless they assessed the offender's risk based on dynamic factors.

### 2.1.6. Theoretical Framework

- **Social Disorganization Theory**

According to the social disorganization theory, the physical and social surroundings of a person are predominantly responsible for the behavioural choices that a person makes (Akers, 2000). This theory attributes that variation in crime and delinquency over time and among territories to the absence or breakdown of communal institutions like family, school, church and local government and communal relationships that traditionally encouraged cooperative relationships among people (Akers, 2000). Relationships among people in a given territory are presumed to be especially organised when there are high levels of involvement across age-levels in activities coordinated by representatives of communal institutions such as family-heads, pastors, school organizations and local officials (Bursik, 1998).

- **The Differential Association Theory**

This theory was propounded by Edwin Sutherland (1939) and it examined criminal behaviour as a consequence of motivation, pressure and socialisation forces which direct behaviour. The theory indicates that individuals become predisposed toward criminality because of an excess of contacts that advocate criminal behavior (Hargan, 2011: 157). Due to these contacts, a person will tend to learn and accept values and attitudes that look more favorably on criminality. An individual is brought to prison and associates with a society of criminals who can influence one into a potentially sophisticated criminal. Haralambos and Holborn, (2008) explained that a person's association with criminals causes him to be socialised into a criminal especially when such person is of weak morals. Hargan (2011) also highlights that contacts in differential association vary according to frequency, duration, priority and intensity hence the frequent contact with convicts for a lengthy prison term will predispose an ex- convict to more criminal activities after serving the prison term.

- The Labeling Theory

This theory is closely linked to social-construction and symbolic-interaction analysis and is based on the theory developed by George Hebert Mead in 1934 (Akers, 2000). The labelling theory holds that deviance is not inherent to an act, but instead focuses on the tendency of majorities to negatively label minorities or those seen as deviant from standard cultural norms (Akers, 2004). The theory is concerned with how the self-identity and behaviour of individuals may be determined or influenced by the terms used to describe or classify them (Akers, 2004). For instance, a person released from prison may carry a certain label given to him by society of being an ex criminal who is prone to criminal activity. Hargan (2011) asserts that individuals are deviant mainly because they have been labeled as deviants by social control agencies and others.

Adler et al (2007) avers that a deviant label can lead to further deviance. The struggle to secure employment upon release, and the label attached to the individual, force the former offenders to find other ways and means to survive. This leads to criminality and reoffending. The labelling of the individual makes it difficult for the former offender to be rehabilitated and reintegrated into society.

- The Shaming Theory

Braithwaite (1989)'s shaming theory argues that stigmatizing or shaming of offenders makes matters worse and increases crime. Such a process makes the offender an irredeemable outlaw, irreconcilable with the community (Hargan, 2011: 180). In a sense, the person is made into a permanent criminal and will have little choice but to associate with similarly stigmatised persons. Braithwaite (1989) calls for "re-integrative shaming" effort to re-integrate the offender back into the community of respectable. Acceptance into the conventional society will help to reduce recidivism.

- Reintegration Theory

The reintegration theory argues that crime and delinquency represent a breach or absence of community (Padayachee, 2008). This theory advances that society breeds criminals and it is only proper that the same society becomes part of the solution when reintegrating the ex-offender (Glanz, 1993). This theory, according to Muntingh (2001), rests on two moral premises. The first moral premise asserts that it is better for people to be in community with one another than not, whereas the second one states that community should be pursued wherever it is absent. The reintegration theory holds that prisons should be run as pre-release centres that engage the convicted prisoner in correctional programmes from the moment he enters prison to lead a law-abiding and useful life (Gendreau, 1996).

## 2.2. Empirical Studies

In Europe, Redondo, Garrido, and Sanchez-Meca (1997) completed a meta-analysis of 32 studies integrating the results of 57 programmes in different European countries. They reported a decrease in reoffending of 15% for those attending programmes over a two year follow up period. A comparable finding in Europe was reported by Losel (1996) who argued that on average, offenders who attend correctional programmes have a 10% lower rearrest, reconviction and reincarceration rate.

In the United Kingdom, McGuire (1998) reviewed 10 meta-analytic studies conducted between 1985 and 1996 based on a cumulative sample of over 50 000 offenders. He found that offenders who had attended programmes reoffended between 10% and 36% less than those who had not attended correctional programmes.

A meta-analysis of Cognitive-behavioural therapy for anger based on 50 studies incorporating 1 640 offenders showed that anger programmes produce an effect size of +0.70 indicating that the average Cognitive-behavioural therapy recipient was better off than 76% of non- recipients (Beck and Fernandez, 1998). The European review of rehabilitation by Redondo, Garrido and Sanchez-Meca (1998) suggests that programmes for violent offenders have the greatest success in reducing reoffending.

Barbarbee, Seto and Maric (1996) assessed violent sex offenders and suggested treatment alternatives. In general, the results of the programmes do not indicate a significant difference between reoffending rates of offenders who completed treatment (18%) and those who refused treatment (20%). The refusers had a higher failure rate (38.9%) than the treatment completers (22.2%) when a comparable follow up was used.

Porporino and Robinson (1992) monitored 1 736 ABE participants released from Canadian prisons in 1988. Among those who completed the ABE program (equivalent to completion of 8<sup>th</sup> grade), 30.1% were readmitted to prison during the follow up period. Reoffending was 35.5% among those who were released from prison before the ABE program. The researchers also reported that the effect of ABE program participation was especially effective among higher risk offenders.

The savings of providing correctional programmes are substantial when considering the findings of a 1996-1997 study done by the Florida Department of Corrections (Florida Department of Corrections, 2006) which provides that the reoffending rate for the 1 788 inmates who received a GED was 29.8% compared to the control group (35.4%). This reduction in reoffending (5.6%) translates into approximately 100 inmates not returning to prison. The reoffending rate for the 1 793 inmates who earned a vocational certificate was 26% compared to the control group (35.4%). This reduction in reoffending (9.4%) translates into approximately 169 inmates not returning to prison. The reoffending rate for the 3 129 inmates who completed a substance abuse program was 31.4% compared to the control group (35.4%). This reduction in reoffending (4%) translates into approximately 125 inmates not returning to prisons.

Boe, R (1998) compared a sample of male federal offenders who participated in Adult Basic Education (ABE) with a national sample of paroled offenders followed after a period of two years. The 718 paroled offenders who completed Adult Basic Education program had a 7.1% reduction in readmissions from 24% for the benchmark group to 22.3% in the program group. 74 paroled offenders who

completed Adult Basic Education program had a 21.3% reduction in the readmissions from 24% for the benchmark group to a 18.9% in the program group.

A study of Texas inmates who became either readers functionally literate, or earned a GED while in the Texas prison system were less likely to recidivate within two years compared to a similar group of Texas prisoners who did not become readers, functionally literate, or earn a GED. Thus, the educational program was associated with an 11% lower rate of recidivism. Obtaining a vocational certificate did not have a significant impact on recidivism. Only 21% of trained inmates obtained employment in their field of training (Fabelo, 2000). The same study showed, however, that a significantly lower percentage of employed ex-offenders recidivated.

Similarly, the Ohio state prison system conducted a study examining the impact of education and job training on recidivism over a two-year period (Wilkinson and Stickrath, 1995). Their findings suggest that about 28% of offenders who completed ("achieved") some form of educational program recidivated within the two year window. Among inmates who did not receive any educational program, 30.4% returned to prison within two years. The difference was most marked for those receiving the GED, where the researchers observed an 8% difference in recidivism between the GED holders compared to the non-GED holders in the comparison group. They also found that receiving the GED closer to the release date was significantly related to increased success upon release (lower recidivism). Inmates who received a college education returned to prison at a lower rate than the comparison group as well (3% lower). Thus, educational achievement had a modest negative.

The Bureau of Prisons (BOP) evaluated its residential drug abuse treatment program based on inmates who had been released from custody for six months (Pelissier et al., 1998). Offenders who had completed the BOP drug abuse treatment program were less likely to be rearrested (3%) or to test positive for drugs (21%) than a comparison group of similar inmates who did not participate in the treatment program (12% for arrest and 37% for drug use). These findings suggest a 73% decrease in rearrest and a 44% decrease in drug use within the first six months of release as a result of the drug treatment program.

A meta-analysis of 291 program evaluations undertaken in a variety of English speaking countries in the past 40 years was conducted by the Washington State Institute for Social Policy in 2006. They found that not all programmes and services aimed at reducing re-offending are effective. Community based "treatment" programmes produced the greatest reductions in re-offending, while programmes without a treatment component such as victim-offender mediation, boot camp, intensive supervision and electronic monitoring had no effect on re-offending. On the whole, programmes that addressed the irrational thoughts and beliefs that contributed to anti-social behaviour were effective.

So, too were drug, and sex offender treatment programmes particularly those for lower risk offenders in the community. Employment, education and training programmes also proved effective in reducing re-offending. More specifically, involvement in prison industries was demonstrated to reduce re-offending by approximately 8%, remedial education by 5%, employment training and job assistance in the community by approximately 5% and vocational education in prison by an impressive 12%. Therapeutic programmes for high risk offenders have been shown to reduce re-offending by an average of 14%.

Ex-offenders encounter a litany of challenges to living a crime free life after release from prison confinement. However, recidivism rates increased drastically due to lack of reintegration services. This follows the study done by Swart and Naude (1994) which states that more than 6 000 sentenced prisoners are released from South African prisons every month and 80-94% of them return to crime. These dismal numbers highlight apparent failures of the justice system and community programmes to successfully rehabilitate and reintegrate offenders.

### **3. Research Methodology**

The research used a descriptive case study research design approach; with the in-depth interview guide and the questionnaire as the key research instruments. The target population consisted of 12 adult ex-offenders at Chikurubi Farm Prison who had served time in prison and 96 incarcerated re-offenders. The research population also comprised of 22 Prisons and Correctional Services Officers, with expert knowledge on offender rehabilitation at the institution.

Non-probability sampling methods in the form of a combination of snowball and purposive sampling were used for recruiting participants and ex-offenders who were previously incarcerated. Twenty respondents (incarcerated re-offenders) were purposively sampled out of 96 re-offenders at the institution. The other group of 4 prison officers provided key informants who were also purposively sampled. The researcher also identified two participants released from prison, who were now employed by different companies, and these participants in turn informed the researcher of two other suitable candidates.

### **4. Research Findings**

#### *4.1. Correctional Programmes at Chikurubi Farm Prison*

Released inmates during an interview were asked if they attend any programmes during their incarceration. The respondents interviewed said they participated in vocational and agricultural skills programmes which included vocational training in trade-related prison work, such as electrical engineering, plumbing and carpentry. The program also covered agricultural aspects such as farming methods and animal husbandry. The following programmes were also attended, recreational activities, religious, social and psychological support, and educational. The above-mentioned programmes are presented by few Correctional Officers trained to facilitate and implement them.

Twenty-nine percent (29%) of the respondents participated in Religious, Social and Psychological Support Programmes. These programs targeted criminogenic needs of prisoners such as cognitive-behavioural functioning, substance abuse, psychosocial

dysfunction, and the development of new attitudes. Religious programmes dealt with the preaching of the gospel by offenders through gospel songs and having Christian religious services.

Seventeen (17%) of respondents had participated in Educational programmes. Educational programmes include the HIV informative program, basic education on aspects such as hygiene matters, adult and remedial programmes and literacy classes. Educational services must be available to all offenders as education plays a role in reducing re-offending when offenders are educated.

#### *4.2. Factors that Affect the Effectiveness of Correctional Programmes*

##### 4.2.1. Risk Principle Adherence

Of the respondents interviewed which consisted of re-offenders (80%) indicated that the responsivity of a program deals with the setting in which it is delivered, offender and therapist characteristics, program intensity, and motivational issues. Offenders must be assessed for the risk of criminal reoffending. This is important because there is a relationship between risk and the intensity of the programming, such that high intensity programmes are most effective for high risk offenders. This is in conformity with Bonta and Polaschek (2012) who stressed that higher risk offenders require more intensive intervention whilst brief and narrowly focused programmes can benefit lower risk offenders. The findings of the study indicate that there are no specific programmes for specific offenders due to the lack of financial and human resources.

##### 4.2.2. Program Responsivity

Particular areas of offender responsivity include, but are not limited to, intelligence, anxiety, verbal ability, motivation, and cultural appropriateness. Majority of participants revealed that these are skills needed for program success. This is inconformity with Andrews (2011) who stressed that responsivity maximizes the offender ability to learn from a rehabilitative intervention by providing cognitive behavioural treatment and tailoring the intervention to the learning style, motivation, abilities and strengths of the offenders. However, the considerable gap remains for a large with the study. Correctional programmes fail because they take place in a living environment considered hostile, unsafe, and filled with negative and anti-social criminogenic behaviours and attitudes.

##### 4.2.3. Criminogenic Needs Targeting

Most of interviewed re-offenders revealed that programmes should target the criminogenic needs of offenders who are assessed as having a need in a particular area. Programming ought to reduce these needs, which may, in turn, reduce the likelihood of reoffending. When programmes do not follow sound programming practices or lack integrity, the impact on reoffending and other outcomes will be lacking. The view of participants were also supported by one key informant who explained that, changes in the level of a problem or condition can result in changes in an individual's likelihood of reoffending.

Assessments of offender needs that are criminogenic are necessary to determine whether an offender needs a particular program. A key informant highlighted the importance of criminogenic needs by pointing out that 'if offenders are placed in programmes they need, they might overcome or reduce the issues that drive their criminality, thus reducing their likelihood of reoffending. If offenders are placed in programming that they do not need, there may be no effect of the programming on recidivism or the programming could actually make reoffending more likely.'

##### 4.2.4. Implementation

All interviewed participants agreed that there should be steps taken to ensure that the program is implemented well and that program integrity is preserved. It is critical that staff implement a correctional program well and as it was designed so that the program has its' intended effect. This is in conformity with the reintegration theory which holds that prisons should be run as pre-release centres that engage the offender in correctional programmes from the moment the offender enters the prison to a law abiding and useful life. However, the study found that programmes are hindered by lack of implementation guidelines where offender enters the program whenever he found it necessary for himself.

##### 4.2.5. Lack of after Care Service

Aftercare services, continuity of care in the community, and relapse prevention are very important for offenders re-entering the community after imprisonment. Most respondents (80%) highlighted that after-care and follow up services after imprisonment were not provided and they experienced challenges associated with transition as a result. They also remarked that the change was too abrupt to handle considering that they received support in prison whereas they received none in the community. Participants argued that the lack of after care services in the community contributed to their loss of purpose in life. This is in conformity with Albertus (2010) who stressed that the first six months of release has been the most vulnerable period for ex-prisoners, who are often confronted with and struggle with the harsh reality of re-entry. This was corroborated by Muntingh,(2001) who showed that after care should aim to help offenders deal with their reintegration challenges in the five domain areas, encompassing employment, financial, accommodation, coping skills and family/social support. However, the study revealed that there is inability for offenders to actually apply and practice them in the living environment not only dilutes effectiveness but renders them all but useless.

### 4.3. Reasons for re-offending

#### 4.3.1. Poverty

One key factor which was pinpointed by all interviewed inmates as contributory to their committing of crime was poverty. Participants (100%) stated that being poor to some extent pushed them to commit crime to meet their basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing. Participants argued that with the global economic recession, many lost their jobs which were their sole source of income implying that they became stuck in the poverty trap a condition which saw them committing crime to meet basic needs. One participant argued that, “*coming from a poor family*” contributed to his committing of crime. Similarly, another participant stated that, “*we didn’t have food, clothes and other things which makes someone to survive so I did crime*”. The views of the participants were also supported by one key informant who explained that, “*most offenders come from poor backgrounds where the support system was poor and the upbringing was not that nurturing. You find out that the family lives in a shack without any visible means of income*”. Although evidence concerning the effects of poverty and crime is looked upon with skepticism, Anderson (2005) reveals that a decrease in poverty generally results in a decrease in economic crime. Further, literature also corresponds with the views of the participants that crime thrives in poverty stricken areas where crime ceases to be associated with criminogenic needs but with need and survival (Andrews, 1995).

#### 4.3.2. Broken Families

One of the causal factors blamed by participants for involvement in crime was that of living in broken families. Most respondents (90%) pinpointed that stable family relationships with married parents who are caring and nurturing critically lacked during their upbringing and that gave room for criminal behaviour. Several scholars such as Akers (2000) and Bursik (1998) allude to the fact that broken families often lead to delinquency. The father absence hypothesis follows the social control theory of crime, which focuses on the significance of emotional attachments of parents and children, their time spent together, and supervision as observed by Akers (2000). Children who become persistent offenders tend to grow-up with more negative family and being brought up with inconsistent and uncaring parenting including violence.

#### 4.3.3. Struggle with Adjustment

One of the key challenges faced by participants during reintegration into mainstream society after correctional programmes was struggle with adjustment. All the participants revealed that the transition from a prison confinement to the society was associated with psychological stress as a result of change. They elaborated that their struggle with adjustment was exacerbated by the fact that they lacked the means such as material resources to deal with change. According to participants, there were numerous developments which had taken place whilst they were in prison, for instance technology such that they felt outdated. The struggle with adjustment could be as a result of the stigma that is attached to ex-prisoners by the society (Braithwaite, 1989; Hargan, 2011).

#### 4.3.4. Peer Pressure

Peer pressure was mentioned as the main factor behind criminal activity by ex-offenders. All (100%) participants stated that young people feel that belonging to a group provided them with the necessary support and protection needed during difficult times. They further argued that whether the peer group engaged in wrong behaviour did not matter much as long as their sense of belonging was enhanced. Participants also stated that it was rather easy to experiment in highly risky behaviour in a group setting than as individuals considering that they supported and encouraged one another in a group. A key informant who is a correctional officer also shared the same sentiments with the ex-offenders by saying, “*some also commit crime just because their friends are doing the same hence they want to fit in a group...umm and also adolescents do commit crime to fulfill the need to experiment and take risks*”. Peer pressure can succinctly be explained by the social disorganization theory (Akers, 200) in which physical and social surroundings of a person shape criminal behaviour. The differential association theory (Sutherland, 1939; Haralambos and Holborn, 2008; Hargan, 2011) also explains why individuals who associate with criminals also become criminals.

According to Bezuidenhout and Joubert (2006), association with delinquent peers increases the likelihood of misconduct, for example, they indicate that when one is young, one is constantly struggling to define and affirm identity and it is mostly in this process that young people often start experimenting in risky offending behaviour as part of their search for an identity. Apart from being young (Bezuidenhout and Joubert 2006), further highlights that social interaction with friends and peers may provide opportunities for crime or may encourage or support this type of behaviour.

### 4.4. Mitigatory Factors for Reoffending

#### 4.4.1. Support for Income Generating Projects after Prison Term

Of the offender respondents, (100%) suggested that community based projects, if formal employment is not possible, should be initiated for ex-convicts to make ends meet as a means of improving motivation. Participants concurred that employment or a source of income that helps meet their basic needs without which life becomes difficult. With an income, participants stated that ex-offenders are likely to gain their self-esteem back and become productive members of the society.

One key informant from the institution highlighted the importance of partnership by pointing out that “*if we continue to work in isolation, we may not attain the bigger goal*”. These stakeholders according to the key-informants should work hand in glove and play

a central role in educating communities about the importance of supporting ex-offenders as well as their initiatives. The information is in conformity with Fabelo (2000) in his study of Texas inmates showed that trained offenders obtained employment in their field of training. However, this research revealed that there is no motivation to the released offenders who participated in correctional programmes due to the scarcity of resources.

#### 4.4.2. Ensuring Completion of the Correctional Programs

The full effects of programming are not always fully known; however, completing programmes provides important information about post-release success, and program non-completers or drop-outs impose a cost both in terms of wasted resources and in depriving motivated offenders of program opportunities (Motiuk,2000). All respondents (100%) indicated that there is limited time for correctional programmes as they are only implemented at most short time before release. Participants reported that period is too short to learn new skills to rehabilitate an offender who has spent many years in prison, in contact with hardened criminals. The feeling by many participants was to commence correctional programmes immediately after arrest up until release. The view of insufficient time for correctional programmes is supported by Muntingh (2001) who argues that Zimbabwe does not have a real tradition of offender reintegration services that start in prison and continue after people are released. The emphasis in Zimbabwean prisons according to Muntingh (2001) has always been on security and as a result prisons have been closed to stakeholders who may wish to offer services there.

#### 4.4.3. Availing Adequate Resources to the Correctional Programs

The prison lacks the facilities and areas for rehabilitation of offenders which affect the performance of correctional programmes. All respondents (100%) agreed that the institution has only yards which have cells for housing inmates and there are no areas for any formal educational programmes while in prison. This was corroborated by Canadian researchers, Andrews et al (1990) when he presented evidence suggesting that appropriate designed services assist the performance of programmes producing on average reduction in reoffending. Many participants were of the view that there is a dire lack of infrastructure at the institution which hinders the performance of programmes. Due to the low ratio of staff to offenders, several participants felt that this was a hindrance performance as they did not get much room to interact with the social workers and other staff. Besides, participants also reported that with different kinds of offenders with different types of criminals sharing one cell, some less hardened offenders tend to learn from hardened offenders as a result of the increased contact and interaction emanating from sharing the same premises.

#### 4.4.4. Increasing Participation

Whilst it was noted during the study that not all inmates undergo the correctional programs, the majority of participants (90%) agreed that successful program participation has been demonstrated to improve the likelihood of post-release success. Assignment to programmes where the need is not identified or the program is inappropriate, may offer little or no benefit and actually contribute to conditional release failure. Program completion is a critical foundation for the safe release of offenders (Motiuk, 2001). Participants recommended that participation in correctional programmes should be increased. Participants argued that doing nothing promotes criminal behaviour whereas being involved in constructive activities promotes rehabilitation.

For instance Francis and Matthew (1996) argue that correctional officers should transform prisons from institutions that function as dungeons, factories, and warehouses to institutions that function as schools. Francis and Matthew (1996) also argue that the provision of correctional programmes opportunities for prisoners can be equated with human development, where prisoners are given programmes to develop new skills that will allow for more efficient and effective functioning.

### **5. Conclusions**

The ZPCS has put some correctional programs for offenders which include: Educational programmes; Vocational training (skills acquisition programmes) which comprises of carpentry, tailoring, building and mechanical engineering; and Religious programmes which deal with the preaching of the gospel by offenders through gospel songs and having Christian religious services. It can be concluded that offending behaviour can be attributed to a myriad of factors which include but are not limited to, peer pressure, poverty, inequality, unemployment, inferiority and struggle with the adjustment. Most criminals are reoffenders who fail to rehabilitate or reform and reintegrate completely into mainstream society. Responses to offender rehabilitation and reintegration are inadequate due to a lack of holistic services being provided as a result of stakeholders working in isolation. Therefore, the society needs to put in place structures and preventative measures to reduce the reoffending rates among ex-convicts. Structures and preventative measures should focus on the holistic needs of offenders which encompass addressing the risks and needs of offenders as well as embracing ex-offenders' initiatives.

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